

CROSSTIMBERS ACORN

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2010

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

This particular Summer has been so hard on plants and people and animals alike. I have passed horses and cattle huddled in the corner of fields with heads hung in absolute despair. They too are awaiting that first "Blue Northner" to roll across the hill and make you scramble for a jacket in a hurry. Any one who hunts, knows how it feels to be out in the open when the "Blue Northerner" hits, with no warning and little care as to whom its victims are.

We are winding down another year as well with the chapter. We will have new people in the stations for November 2010. I have not yet seen the list. Maybe you all know who they are.

As the Vice President of Advocacy for the State Board, I will be away in September, delivering a speech to one of our sister chapters. I will be in South Texas. I know you all will have a great meeting and lots of good information from the attending speaker.

I understand that your social hour is being hosted by Dorothy Babbitt and Eileen Porter. I know both these ladies and your refreshments should be worth the trip to the meeting alone.

I have had a very busy Summer and though I have not seen any of you - - I have been about State Business. I have lots of irons in the fire and have met so many nice, interested, involved people.

Our symposium is in October. Please get registered if you mean to attend. It has all the makings of an informative and fun Friday - Saturday and Sunday. Early registration has been extended until September 10, 2010. It is my hope that you will at least attend part of the happenings. It truly is something where you can net work and learn at the same time.

Teaching plant roots to grow deeply for water will lessen irrigation needs during hot weather. Make sure that irrigation drip lines, soaker hoses, sprinklers and trenches are in place before root systems get too large. You do not want to disturb the plant once their root system is working, by installation of irrigation lines.

Weather and texture and make up of your soil determine the amount and frequency of irrigation needed in your garden. Heavy clay soils require less frequent irrigation than sandy loam soils. During long periods of hot weather, plants need more water. However, soggy will increase root rot. All things in moderation - even when gardening.



Mulching the coil with 4 to 5 inches of organic matter - - - leaves, straw , grass clippings or regular hardwood mulch - can temper the drying and heating effects of the sun and wind and heat, allowing irrigation to be more effective with less frequent and more quantity watering practices. Mulch deters weed seed germination and at the same time, breaks the weed matter down into constant nutrition to the plant roots.

To test how deeply your irrigation water is penetrating, water for the usual length of time. Push a trowel into the soil for it's full length. Put the soil clump to one side. Lift it out completely if you like. Look at both the depth of the roots and the water line in the soil. It will be dark where it is moist and lighter where it is dry. The water line should be just past the longest roots. If it hasn't gotten down that far, replace the clump and water again. Retest the bed in another spot.

You should not water until at all until two-thirds of the root length is again dry. This may mean you have to double the space between waterings. Or it may mean increasing the time. It will depend on how carefully you check and monitor in the very beginning of the watering session.

PLANT BRONZE FENNEL

Plant or sow bronze fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) among your annuals and perennials for a dramatic addition to the flower gardens. Unlike the bulb-forming fennel, grow this one for its unusual color. The graceful , feathery six foot form in later

BAPTISIA The 2010 "PLANT OF THE YEAR"

Baptisia australis is a Spring blooming wonder. It offers stunning violet-blue lupine-like flowers in erect racemes atop an attractive mound of trifoliate, bluish-green foliage. It has the allure of a superstar, but the plant was not honored for beauty and charm alone. It was awarded this honor for its adaptability to various climates, multi-season interest, resistance to pests and diseases, low maintenance, easy propagation and ready availability at nurseries and garden centers.

Baptisia is native to the eastern and midwestern states. It is a host plant for several indigenous butterflies, including the Wild Indigo Duskywing. Like other members of the legume family, *baptisia* fixes nitrogen with the help of bacteria that forms nodules along its roots, enabling it to convert atmospheric nitrogen into a usable nutrient. Once established - *baptisia* requires no supplemental fertilizer.

This perennial is very desirable as it is drought tolerant as well. It grows deep taproots - making it impossible to transplant or divide. However, this trait enables it to survive prolonged periods of hot dry weather. This plant needs little coddling in the landscape - simply provide full sun, well-drained soil - a bit of mulch. Be patient as small plants will grow slowly at first - requiring time to fulfill their ultimate potential.



Minutes from the last meeting were sent to you via email. Please come to the business meeting ready to make any corrections or additions to those minutes so they can be voted on. If you have misplaced your copy - get in touch with Tricia Hopkins for an additional copy of last minutes as she recorded them.

JAPANESE BEETLE

Anyone gardening in the Eastern U. S. is familiar with the Japanese beetle. This voracious consumer of just about anything green in the garden is very destructive. It is continually expanding its range and destruction. More than \$450 million dollars is spent each year in an effort to control this pest and replace the vegetation damage.

It seems to have met its match in devouring the leaf and blossom of the geranium. Since 1920 scientists have noted that when Japanese beetles feed on the flowers of *Pelargonium zonale* (the cheerful geranium that graces many gardens) that within 30 minutes they become paralyzed for about 24 hours. Agricultural Research Service Technology Research Unit in Wooster, Ohio is working to develop a natural botanic pesticide based on the compounds in the geranium petals that have such a harmful effect on the beetles.

In the mean time - since they have been working on this since 1920 and have no feasible product - - - - I suggest you do what I do. Fill a long plastic planter about 1/8 full of plain water. Leave it in the open where the beetles take flight and dine in the late evening. When you come out in the morning you will find hundreds have landed in the water and drowned. Do not know why this works, but it is a cheap - non stressful - no pesticide way to get rid of them a "boat load at a time". Just keep emptying the container (after they are dead) - - - refill and wait for the next visitors who seem to have no idea how to swim.

Make your own complete, slow-release and fairly well balanced granulated fertilizer from natural ingredients.

Use four parts seedmeal or fish meal

One part agricultural or dolomitic lime

One part rock phosphate or one-half part bonemeal

One-half part kelpmeal

Seedmeal is any kind of ground up seed. Cottonseed is the most inexpensive and easy to work with - but contains the most pesticide residues.

Fishmeal tends to be odorous for a day or two.

All are high in nitrogen and contain moderate amounts of phosphorus - but little potassium

September Meeting:

Harberger Hill Community Center
701 Narrow Street
Weatherford, TX 76086

Meeting social hour: 6:30 PM

Meeting business hour 6:45 PM

Speaker takes the floor
at 7:00 PM

